

South Precinct Email Community Newsletter

December 4, 2006



Dear Community Friends:

Residential Burglaries

In recent months, the South Precinct has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of residential burglaries. The vast majority of the burglaries occurred mid-day. Many of them have been committed by juveniles. A number of these youth have been identified, contacted and some have even admitted to the burglaries they've committed. Our detectives have been working hard trying to tie the suspects to the actual burglaries, rather than just possession of stolen property. We have had some successes, but it's been tough. Even in burglaries where a person was seen in the house, when a suspect has been picked up, witnesses were not able to make a positive ID. Because we had no other solid evidence on which to hold them, the suspect had to be released.

Often, a potential burglar will knock on the front doors during the day when most people are away at work. If someone answers, they ask for "John" or "Kimberly" or some fake name, then they leave and continue down the block looking for empty homes. When they find an empty home, they go around to the back to look for or try an unlocked window. If nothing is opened or unlocked, they will use force to gain entry (break a window, kick in the door).

We're also noticing an increase in night time/early morning burglaries where people are at home asleep. Someone would come through an unlocked door or force open the door, grab the items that are right by the door (laptops, I-Pods, purses) and rush out before the residents know that someone has been in the house. Occupied burglaries are rare. It is the kind of burglary we fear the most, yet it is one that happens the least. While a few victims have seen the person, no one has been directly confronted or hurt, and the burglar usually runs off rather than confront the resident.

With the holiday season upon us, many of us will be buying or receiving gifts. During this time of year, we also see an increase in residential burglary.

What You Can Do

- Make sure you lock your doors, and windows.
- Don't just drop your purse/laptop/small electronics/keys right by the door you came in; take them further into the home away from the door.
- Be extra alert and watch for anything suspicious, especially during the holidays when people are often out of town.
- Pay attention to who's out and about in your neighborhood. If you see kids that don't live in your neighborhood walking around and looking around - especially during hours that these kids should be in school - they may be looking for a place to burglarize or a car to prowl.
- If you are home and someone comes to the door, you should answer it. That doesn't mean you *open* the door. Always know who's on the other side of that door before you open it. Talk to the person at the door *through* the door. If the burglar knows someone is home, more often than not, they're going to move on. Alert your neighbors to be watchful and call 911 about suspicious people going door-to-door.
- When recycling gift boxes, wait until collection day before you put them out with the recycling. Break the boxes down and turn them inside out and put them at the bottom of the recycle bin if you can. Do not advertise what new stuff you got over the holidays by putting the box the stuff came in out on the curb on recycling day.

The best form of crime prevention is talking with neighbors BEFORE a crime happens on your street. Bad guys know that they probably won't get away with things on a street where they see neighbors talking with one another.

Until Next Time, Take Care And Stay Safe! Mark Solomon, South Precinct Crime Prevention Coordinator